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BUREAU OF EXPERTIZING.

Advice as to the placing at public or private sale of art works of all kinds, pictures, sculptures, furniture, bibelots, etc., will be given at the office of the American Art News, and also counsel as to the value of art works and the obtaining of the best "expert" opinion on the same. For these services a nominal fee will be charged. Persons having art works and desirous of disposing or obtaining an idea of their value, will find our service on these lines a saving of time, and, in many instances, of unnecessary expense. It guarantees that any opinion given will be so given without regard to personal or commercial motives.

AS TO ART APPRAISALS.

The recent suit of a Mrs. Roskilley against a New York Fire Insurance Company to recover some \$14,000, the claimed value of several old pictures by fire in her Westchester country house last year, and which she won, despite the testimony of an "expert." Miss Barnes, for many years Secretary to the late John La Farge, that the burned paintings were not worth in all more than \$600, has directed the attention of art lovers to the value of so-called appraisals of art works.

The question is a serious one. There are individuals and companies which make such appraisals for a consideration, sometimes for a percentage on the total amount of the appraisal, and again for a fixed and agreed upon amount. The first method, it seems to us, is unwise, as the appraiser is naturally inclined to place as high a value as possible upon the objects passed upon, in order to increase his percentage of financial return. The second method, if the appraiser is competent, is safer and wiser, but there is so much incompetence in the appraisal of art works, that when fire or other loss or damage occur, owners, in the majority of cases, are annoyed and disappointed to find that the insurance companies are apt to question the appraiser's figures. The same result frequently occurs when appraisals are made to de-

termine values for the inheritance tax, insurance, or for projected auction or private sales.

The honest and competent art appraiser will always ascertain, if possible, when called in to estimate the value of art belongings, for what purpose the appraisal is to be made, and will then endeavor to place the values, through his knowledge of the subject, of auction records (really the only business standard of value) and of the market, as fairly as possible. In the case of Mrs. Roskilley, it would appear that she was unusually fortunate in having an appraisal which the court sustained, against even the testimony and opinion of a competent "expert." It would not be well, however, for other owners of art works, to argue from the experience of Mrs. Roskilley, if some appraiser has given a high value to their belongings, that they would be as fortunate in case of loss or damage if the appraisal contested by the insurance companies.

We would advise all owners of art works to be very sure in calling in an appraiser, that such appraiser is independent of all trade or business influences, is thoroughly familiar with the kind of works appraised, schools of painting, for example, and has been a close student and follower of art auction sales and records, as well as of private sales for at least twenty-five years. Only by and through the employment of such independent and competent persons, can a just idea of values be obtained. And let us again remind our readers, that no so-called "expert" is infallible.

JACACCI BOOK OUT.

The first volume of the sumptuous publication entitled "Noteworthy Paintings in American Private Collections," which has been in preparation for over six years past, has been issued by the A. Jacacci Company. This volume, the first of an edition of only 126 copies, is the first of five in the first series. Three series in all, consisting of five volumes each, is contemplated. Each volume is to cost the subscribers \$1,000, so that the three series, if ever completed, will cost each subscriber \$15,000, and if the 126 sets are all subscribed for, will represent a gross total, to the publishers of the work, of \$1,890,000—some money, eh!

The first volume, which comes in a large square wooden box, is elaborately bound in an embossed thick velum, and is most beautifully printed on rich paper with most expensive and effective reproductions of noted pictures in the collections of Mrs. John L. Gardiner, and Messrs. Herbert Terrell and Albert J. Sprague. The volume is printed by Gilliss Bros. and is in every way the handsomest of its kind ever published in America, or possibly in the world.

MR. BINYON LECTURES.

Mr. Lawrence Binyon, the English art critic, lectured at the Metropolitan Museum Dec. 4, and again at the Montross Galleries on the evenings of Dec. 5 and 9 on early Japanese art. Mr. Binyon on these occasions read a well-prepared paper on the subject, but his monotonous delivery disappointed his audiences. American audiences dislike to listen to lectures read from MSS. The admirable stereopticon slides which Mr. Binyon employed to illustrate his papers, fortunately somewhat overweighed the depressing effect of his dull delivery and were deservedly applauded.

THE SCANDINAVIAN EXHIBIT.

At least one illusion has been dispelled by the exhibition at the American Art Galleries of modern Scandinavian pictures, which opened with a reception and private view, Monday evening last, to continue through Christmas Day. We had been led to believe there was a Scandinavian School of Modern Painting. If the present exhibition is representative, such a school does not exist. No modern Dane, Swede or Norwegian has hit upon a note that can be called national or even individual. Each has been satisfied to strike one already struck elsewhere—as a rule in Paris—and in trying to duplicate it, has generally failed to reproduce the tone of the original.

In these days, when so fierce a revolution has broken out in the world of art, one executed a heavy blow to be dealt in its behalf by the rugged, independent races of Northwestern Europe, who had begun and only comparatively recently, to take an interest in art, and were not hampered by its traditions. The field was very promising, the results are rather disappointing.

Take for instance Edward Munch, considered the most gifted of Norway's painters and the leader of the nationalists. He has tried his hand at Post-Impressionism in "In the Garden." It has no beauty of color to redeem the awkward lines of the girl in the foreground, or the formless, impossible tree in the background. "In the Orchard"—a modern Adam and Eve standing under an apple tree, whose trunk and branches take the shape of the Serpent—is clever in design and suggestion, but the color is opaque. And in the matter of pure color, few of the Norwegians who have borrowed from Paris appear to have adopted the clean palette of Monet. Thorvald Erichsen, whose "Snow After Sunset" shimmers with reflective light, and whose "Twilight" is the most impressive landscape in the exhibition; Bernard Folkestad, in "Summer Day," Thorlof Holmboe, in an Autumn scene, and Henrik Lund, in his excellent portrait of Hans Jaeger, who is leaning over a fence, are exceptions. And speaking of portraits, there is a remarkable one of a woman in black in the Danish section, by Einar Nielsen, as relentless as a Holbein, and depending entirely upon line for modeling.

Jens Ferdinand Willumsen, also a Dane, has stolen directly from Sorolla in his beach scene, "Youth and Sunshine," but the picture lacks Sorolla's brilliancy, and when Willumsen attempts brilliant color as he does in "The Painter and His Family," with a glaring red background, it is heavy and opaque; the flesh tints muddy.

In the Swedish section are to be found several Anders Zorns, one, "Dagmar," a charming outdoor nude, but Zorn's great qualities and his limitations are too well known in this examples of his work in the exhibition country to need further reference here.

One has heard so much of Prince Eugen's talent as a landscape painter that it is disappointing to find the two are quite ordinary, and without any modern feeling. Carl Larsson's watercolors are quite perfect in line, but their very faultlessness deprives them of any particular interest. They would make exquisite Christmas Cards. In direct contrast are Axel Petersson's statuettes in wood, full of grotesque humor. He is a Daumier turned wood carver.

BYRON P. STEPHENSOM.

CORRESPONDENCE.

The French Art Museum.

Editor AMERICAN ART NEWS,

Dear Sir:

What kind of a game is this French Art Museum anyway? I read that last Saturday a Mr. McDougall Hawkes, who appears to be the "chief cook and bottle washer" of the new Institution, "dined and wined" at his house a number of artists, including those American painters, Carroll Beckwith and John W. Alexander—the last, President of the National Academy and, if memory serves me aright, the man who could see no way of having the admirable collection of French pictures, sent over last year through Miss Cornelia Sage of Buffalo by the Société Nouvelle of Paris, of which he is, I am told, a member, shown in New York, and certain art writers for the dailies and monthlies, some of whom he has placed on committees of the Museum. On Sunday last, I further read, he lunched and dined others who may have influence in art matters in New York.

Why all this energy and expenditure in the cause of French art in America on the part of Mr. Hawkes? Is he an art collector or patron? Has he done anything for the cause of American art?

And why do Beckwith and Alexander take such an interest in the Museum?

How is the project for new galleries for the old Academy getting on?

Are funds needed for these?

Is it possible that Fashion and Society interests and influences weigh more with American artists and patrons than the cause of their National Art? What is the game anyway?

Respectfully yours,

Associate.

New York, Dec. 12, 1912.

[We are really unable to answer these questions, and would refer our correspondent to Mr. McDougall Hawkes, Mr. W. Francklyn Paris, Secretary of the new Museum, or Messrs. Alexander or Beckwith?—Ed.]

OBITUARY.

J. Scott Hartley.

It is with sincere regret that the AMERICAN ART NEWS has to announce the news of the death on Dec. 6 of Jonathan Scott Hartley, the veteran sculptor, in his sixty-seventh year.

He was born in Albany September 23, 1845, was educated at the Albany Academy, and began his professional career as a worker in marble in that city. He soon developed talent as a sculptor, and, feeling the need of study, he went to England, where he entered the Royal Academy and gained a silver medal in 1869. He became one of the original members of the Salmagundi Club, was one of the moving spirits in the New York Art Students' League and was instructor of anatomy in the league's schools, 1878 to 1884. He served as president of the league in 1879 and 1880, and was on the Art Jury for Sculpture at the Charleston Exposition of 1901-'02.

Mr. Hartley was always in the front rank of those fighting for the development and better appreciation of art in the United States. His career as a sculptor was prolific, and he has left behind him numerous public memorials as well as small bronzes that have been reproduced many times. Among the more famous of his earlier works are "The Young Samaritan," "King René's Daughter," "The Whirlwind" and the bas-reliefs on the monument at Schuylerville, in Saratoga County, that commemorates the defeat of Burgoyne.

He leaves a widow, who was the daughter of George Inness, and five children—four daughters and a son.

Mary A. Sheldon.

Miss Mary A. Sheldon, a painter and instructor, died Dec. 8, in her fifty-third year. She had studied art in Paris under Eugene Gaffet and in London under Louis F. Day, and last year received the degree of master of arts from Columbia University. Miss Sheldon, at the time of her death, was an instructor at Cooper Union, the Barnard School for Boys and Girls, and the Normal College.